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CEMETERY RESTORATION GUIDELINES

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1. CEMETERIES AS CULTURAL OR RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Cemeteries were North America's first major urban parks. In some cases, like Montreal's Dominion Square, the park function has outlived the cemetery use. In other places a well-manicured cemetery has been retained as a quiet node in the downtown. Some, like Boston's Mount Auburn cemetery laid out in the mid-19th century with winding paths and specimen plantings, were influential in the planning and road patterns chosen to give a park-like air to a city suburb like Rosedale, developed on the northern fringe of Toronto between 1860 and 1914.

As peaceful places in our rural and urban landscapes, cemeteries are also invaluable sources of genealogical information, particularly for the period prior to 1869 when the first law was passed requiring births, marriages and deaths to be recorded by a provincial registrar.

As well, the layout of a burying ground, combined with the epitaphs, size, style and quality of the grave markers, provides a special insight into the social character of a community. This insight may be extended to an understanding of the philosophy of a bygone generation. Jean-Claude Marsan, in describing the monuments of the Victorian era, comments:

"For the rich bourgeoisie of that era, death was the one misfortune they would not escape, the only obstacle their wealth and power could not overcome. So they decided to camouflage it with the kind of decor their wealth could afford. (1)

Needless to say, the close association between cemeteries and deeply held religious beliefs is recognized and respected throughout this guideline.



Ontario

Ministry of Heritage
Culture and Conservation
Recreation DivisionHon. Reuben C. Baetz
Minister
Douglas Wright
Deputy Minister

2. CEMETERIES AS HERITAGE PROPERTY

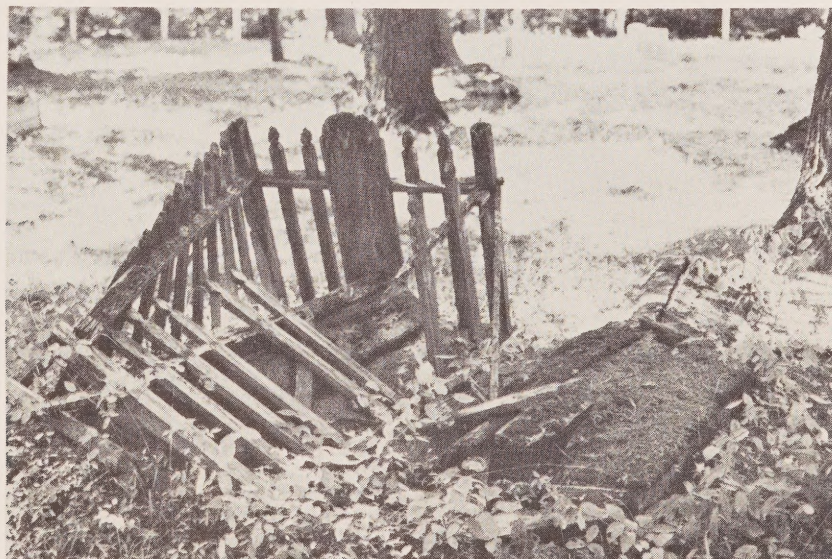
Although cemeteries are regulated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations under The Cemeteries Act, there is a general consensus that, except in special circumstances outlined below, a cemetery may be designated under Section 29 of The Ontario Heritage Act. The grounds for designation might be for either or both of the following reasons:

Historical - Depending upon the period when a cemetery or churchyard was in use, or the importance to a community of the people interred there, a burying ground may deserve the recognition and protection of designation.

Architectural - Dead houses, gateways, fences or walls, chapels and other structures relating to cemeteries have obvious architectural interest. Also, the monuments and grave markers have, in themselves, an architectural value as examples of craftsmanship in particular materials or styles. If the term "architectural" is taken to include landscape architecture, then cemeteries have an important value in developing an understanding of design principles over time.

It can also be said that cemeteries incorporate scenic and aesthetic qualities that fit the broader definition of heritage. Often they are located in association with an attractive natural feature such as a hilltop or waterfront, or they provide the setting for a handsome building such as a church. Also, there may be aesthetic qualities comparable to a work of art in the layout of pathways, gates, fences, walls and plantings; in the relationship between the site plan and natural setting; or in the sculptural motifs and forms of individual monuments.

The burying grounds of native peoples have great meaning for the descendants of those who rest there and are important links in native cultural traditions.



4. ADVISORY SERVICES

To undertake a proper cemetery restoration, it is likely the following persons will be involved:

- 1) representatives of the cemetery's board of trustees or the municipality;
- 2) where appropriate or possible, descendants of the persons interred in the graveyard;
- 3) historical researchers to identify original conditions;
- 4) craftsmen in stone masonry, carpentry and welding to clean and repair damaged markers;
- 5) a general contractor to clear unwanted vegetation, level settled areas, restore walls, fencing, pathways and drives.

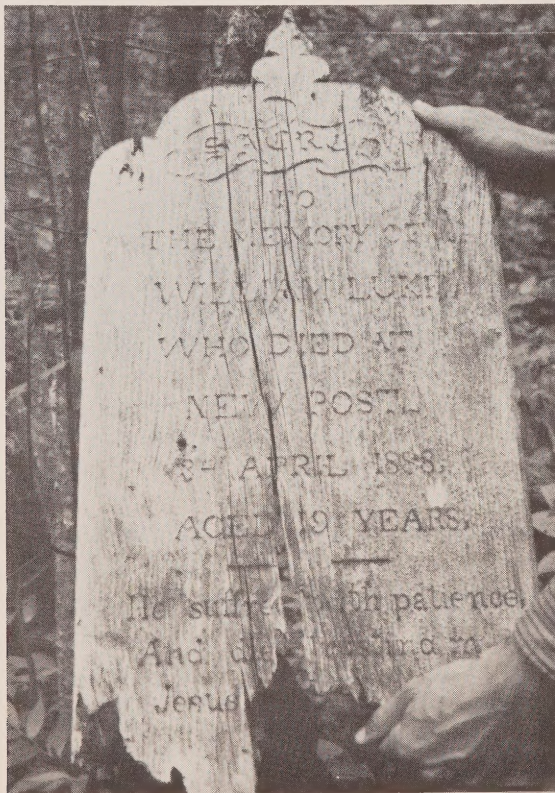
5. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The goal of all projects should be to restore and enhance the heritage value of the cemetery consistent with the religious values which are held by the descendants of the persons buried there. Specific objectives are grouped below by general headings:

A) DOCUMENTATION

A-1) ORIGINAL PLAN: Identify original plan including plots, pathways and drives.

A-2) SPECIAL FEATURES: Identify location and original appearance of buildings and picturesque features such as fences, walls, gateways, landscape plantings, etc.



3. PROBLEMS

The grave markers that were most popular in the 19th century have proved quite vulnerable to decay. Little remains of the earliest wood markers. Soft white marble, perhaps the most popular stone material of the 19th century, weathers rapidly, assisted by air pollution. In many cases, fungal growth has completed the obliteration of any legible inscription. Sandstone markers are plagued by exfoliation. Slate markers have weathered much better but, unfortunately, are quite rare. Cast iron markers, perhaps equally rare, suffer from rust. (2)

Grave fences, made usually of wood or iron, also have suffered the assaults of neglect, vandals and people who have carried off sections to use in their gardens.



Besides deterioration of the markers, poor maintenance is a major problem for the older and smaller cemeteries. Section 62 of The Cemeteries Act specifies that a municipality must assume the ownership and maintenance responsibilities of abandoned cemeteries. This rule has been ignored in many instances and has resulted in invasion by shrubs and trees, settling of ground over graves, and vandalism.

A-3) INSCRIPTIONS: Record all inscriptions, in writing and possibly in rubbings.

A-4) INVENTORY OF GRAVE MARKERS: Identify and inventory the grave markers noting shape, motifs, material, epitaphs and location within the cemetery.

B) MONUMENT RESTORATION

B-1) SELECTION: Wherever physical conditions permit, as many monuments as possible should be made good and legible. In all cases, ensure that the restored markers represent a cross-section of the total inventory.

B-2) EXPERT ADVICE ON RESTORATION: In no case should stone monuments be sandblasted. The applicant should seek advice on the restoration of grave markers from a professional restoration architect or contractor. Where a building is to be restored, the project should be referred to the Heritage Administration Branch, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Queen's Park, M7A 2R9 (Tel. 416-965-4021)

C) GENERAL

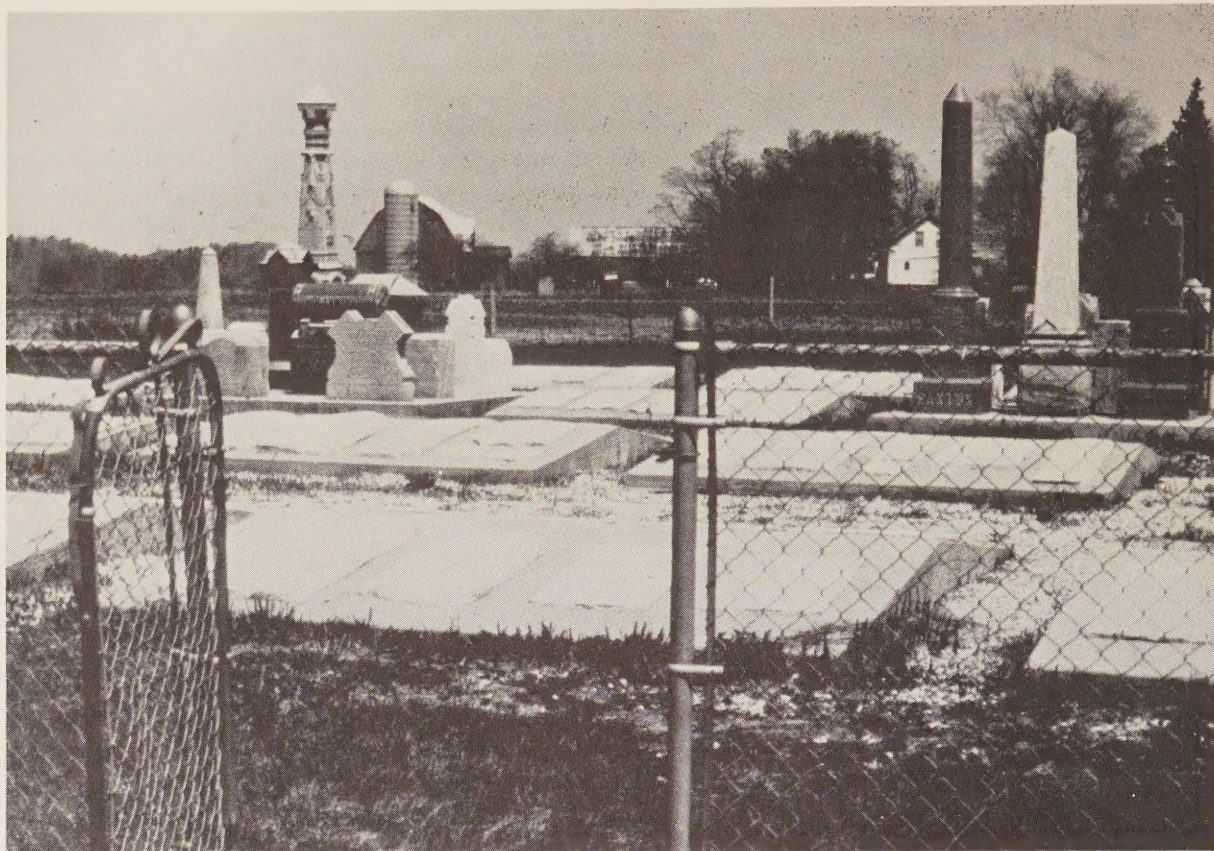
The most useful work that can be done is removal of overgrown brush and weeds, cutting of long grass and trimming around headstones and markers, repairing and straightening headstones, sowing grass seed or placing sod in bare areas, and repairing and painting fences.

C-1) INVADING VEGETATION: Certain shrubs, weeds and, in some cases, trees that have invaded the cemetery, should be removed with care; often they hide old monuments. The natural heritage should be respected. Trees and shrubs that do not pose a threat to the cemetery features may be conserved.

C-2) GROUND SETTLEMENT: Sunken areas over graves should be filled and made level. No digging should be done. If earth is brought in to fill in depressions, care must be taken that footstones, corner stones or other markers are not covered. If any heavy machinery is being used, it should be operated by qualified personnel and it is important that it not be used on top of burial lots or in any way that might damage markers or other fixtures on the lots.

C-3) RESTORATION OF SPECIAL FEATURES: Features identified to be of special importance to the original appearance - e.g. gateways - should be carefully restored. Fences and walls should be kept up and plantings reintroduced to enhance the attractiveness of the burying ground.

C-4) MOVING OF GRAVE MARKERS: Monuments, headstones or markers should not be permanently removed from the locations in which they are found. If they must be temporarily moved within the cemetery for straightening or to reassemble them when they are broken, care must be taken to note the original locations and to replace them in the correct spots. The permission of descendants to move the markers may be required, but in all cases where the descendants are known, they should be consulted as a matter of courtesy.



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Regrouping markers, e.g. into cairns, memorial walls or close groupings, should be avoided, except in the following cases:

- original siting cannot be determined, or
- extreme isolation of the site has resulted in a continuing problem of vandalism.

C-5) Once a burying ground has been restored, arrangements should have been made for its continuing upkeep and maintenance.

6. RESTORATION ASSISTANCE

Projects involving the restoration of a public cemetery or church burying ground may receive assistance from the Ministry of Culture and Recreation through Wintario on the same basis as other capital projects including the requirements for private support, but in addition are subject to special conditions set out below. The Ministry's consultants located in field offices across the province are able to advise applicants on the planning of their projects and to assist with the completion of the application forms for Wintario assistance.

A) SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- A-1) Routine maintenance is the responsibility of the trustees, municipality or congregation and is, therefore, not an eligible component of the project.

- A-2) The cemetery must have heritage interest which is recognized by the community through a designation of the property under Section 29 of The Ontario Heritage Act.

Where the burying ground is on Crown Land forming part of an Indian reserve, and cannot be designated under provincial legislation, a resolution of the Band Council expressing the importance of the cemetery will suffice.

Where a cemetery is on other Crown Lands or in an unorganized area, the local manager of the Ministry of Natural Resources district must be given notice so the burying ground may be identified as a sensitive area under the ministry's program for land use co-ordination.

A copy of the designating by-law, the Band Council resolution or the notice to the MNR district manager should accompany the application.

- A-3) Since it is important that a cemetery be kept up and maintained after the restoration project is completed, some acknowledgement of this obligation by the trustees, municipality or congregation should accompany the application too.

Where a cemetery is abandoned, it becomes the responsibility of the municipality under Section 62 of The Cemeteries Act. In cases where the municipality has responsibility for a burying ground, acknowledgement of the municipal obligation to maintain the area will be a by-law under Section 65 of The Cemeteries Act.

7. UNMARKED HUMAN BURIALS

The Cemeteries Act defines a cemetery as "land that is set apart or used as a place for the interment of the dead or in which human bodies have been buried". If an unmarked burial which is thought to be human is found, it is best to report it to the appropriate authority who will make a determination whether death occurred through natural causes and the land and remains will be subject to The Cemeteries Act, or whether criminal circumstances existed at the time of death.

The appropriate authority in every case is the Regional Coroner, Ministry of the Solicitor General; addresses and telephone numbers for the different regional coroners offices are listed below.

Regional Coroners:

Dr. R.B. Penton P.O. Box 580 St. Catharines.	Tel: (416) 682-9209	<u>Region "C"</u> Counties of Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara North and South, Wentworth- Halton
Dr. E.P. King Coroners Building 26 Grenville Street Toronto. M4Y 1A3	Tel: (416) 965-6678	<u>Region "D"</u> Counties of Peel, York and Metro Toronto
Dr. J.P. MacKay 16 Seguin Street Parry Sound, P2A 1B1	Tel: (705) 746-2123	<u>Region "G"</u> Counties of Renfrew, District of Nipissing, Parry Sound, Sudbury, Manitoulin
Dr. W.W. Wigle 479 Government Street Dryden, P8N 2P4	Tel: (807) 223-6956	<u>Region "I"</u> District of Thunder Bay, Rainy River, and that part of the District of Kenora lying west of the 87th parallel of longitude
Dr. H.B. Cotnam Chief Coroner 26 Grenville Street Toronto, M4Y 1A3	Tel: (416) 965-6678	All other counties not listed above come under the direct jurisdiction of the Chief Coroner

Photographs:

I.	Cemetery on Highway #7, between Stratford and Kitchener.	S.A. Otto
II.	St. John's Cemetery, Garden River Indian Reserve, Sault Ste. Marie.	Thor Conway
III.	Cochrane Cemetery, Egremont, Grey Co.	Douglas Koch
IV.	New Post, Abitibi River, Cochrane District.	Thor Conway
V.	Port Burwell, Elgin Co.	Douglas Koch

References:

- (1) Jean-Claude Marsan, Exploring Montreal (Toronto: Montreal Society of Architecture in affiliation with Greey de Pencier Publications, 1974), pp.96
- (2) Carole Hanks, Early Ontario Gravestones (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1974) pp.14